

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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BRUSSELS FROM BONN DTD 06 JAN 1978 QTE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, GW

SUBJECT: MINISTER OF STATE WISCHNEWSKI COMMENTS ON
MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS

REF: (A) BONN 00020 (NOTAL); (B) BONN 18430 (NOTAL)

1. AT LUNCH WITH ME JANUARY 5, MINISTER OF STATE
WISCHNEWSKI IN CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE MADE SOME COMMENTS
ON MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS WHICH MAY BE OF INTEREST.
WISCHNEWSKI, OF COURSE, HAS CLOSE CONTACTS IN THE ARAB
WORLD AND KNOWS THE AREA WELL.

2. WISCHNEWSKI EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT SADAT HAS
EXAGGERATED IDEAS THAT, WITH HELP FROM THE U.S. AND
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OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES, THE ECONOMY OF EGYPT CAN BE
CHANGED FOR THE BETTER OVER NIGHT. HE INDICATED THAT
THE REPORTS HE HAS SEEN OF CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S TALKS
IN EGYPT CONFIRM THAT SADAT HAS MANY ILLUSIONS ON THIS
SCORE.

3. ALLUDING AGAIN TO REPORTS FROM THE CHANCELLOR'S

PARTY, WISCHNEWSKI SAID HE UNDERSTANDS THAT SADAT'S CLOSE ADVISORS WERE DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED WITH ISRAELI ATTITUDES AS DEMONSTRATED AT THE CONFERENCE AT ISMALIA. AT THE SAME TIME, WISCHNEWSKI NOTED THAT SADAT IS TALKING OPENLY ABOUT THE NEED TO BRING PRESSURE TO BEAR ON ISRAEL; HE FEELS THAT THIS SORT OF PUBLIC TALK IS UNFORTUNATE AND PROBABLY COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE.

4. WISCHNEWSKI, WHILE SAYING THAT HE IS CERTAINLY NO SUPPORTER OF THE SOVIET UNION, STATED HIS BELIEF THAT AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE IF THE SOVIETS FEEL THAT THEY ARE BEING DELIBERATLY ISOLATED. HE FEELS THAT PRECISELY THIS ATTITUDE MAY BE DEVELOPING. HE HAD WELCOMED THE JOINT US-SOVIET STATEMENT LAST FALL BUT IS CONCERNED THAT THE FORWARD MOVEMENT WHICH THIS REPRESENTED MAY HAVE BEEN DISSIPATED.

5. WISCHNEWSKI ALSO FEARS THAT EGYPT MAY BECOME EVEN MORE ISOLATED THAN IT NOW IS IN THE ARAB WORLD. HE DISMISSED IRAQI AND LIBYAN OPPOSITION AS RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT; HOWEVER, HE FEELS THAT THERE IS A RISK THAT SOME COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE BEEN ON THE FENCE MAY BE INCLINED TO TAKE A STAND AGAINST EGYPT. SO FAR AS SYRIAN PREMIER ASSAD IS CONCERNED, WISCHNEWSKI THINKS HE WOULD LIKE TO GIVE MORE SUPPORT TO SADAT, BUT IS
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HAMPERED BY STRIFE BETWEEN THE BAA'TH FACTIONS IN IRAQ AND SYRIA. LEBANESE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT IS LIMITED ALSO BY THE LARGE NUMBER OF PALESTINIANS WITHIN THE COUNTRY.

6. WISCHNEWSKI ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN IN GENERAL ABOUT THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM, POINTING TO THE INFLUENCE OF THE PALESTINIANS IN ALMOST ALL OF THE MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES WHICH IS DERIVED FROM THE FACT THAT PALESTINIANS HOLD HIGH POSTS IN GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACIES THROUGHOUT THE AREA. HE NOTED PARENTHETICALLY THAT, DURING THE LUFTHANSA HIJACKING CRISIS, HE HAD FOUND THAT THE LEADERS IN ABU DHABI WERE RELUCTANT TO COOPERATE WITH THE FRG BECAUSE OF THE PRESENCE OF SO MANY PALESTINIANS IN THE GOVERNMENT APPARATUS.

7. WISCHNEWSKI CONFIRMED THAT HE HAD MET IN BONN LAST NOVEMBER WITH PLO REPRESENTATIVE SARTAWI (REFTEL). HE DESCRIBED SARTAWI AS A TRUSTED CONFIDANT OF ARAFAT AND SAID HE HAD ALSO SEEN SARTAWI IN VIENNA WHERE SARTAWI HAD HELD TALKS WITH CHANCELLOR KREISKY. DURING HIS TALK WITH SARTAWI IN VIENNA

WISCHNEWSKI SAID SARTAWI HAD EXPRESSED THE URGENT DESIRE TO SEE ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN IN BONN AND WISCHNEWSKI HAD RELAYED THIS REQUEST THROUGH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT. HOWEVER, DAYAN HAD REFUSED TO SEE SARTAWI, SAYING HE COULD NOT SEE HIM "YET". WISCHNEWSKI NOTED THIS REQUEST TO SEE DAYAN HAD COME AFTER SADAT'S VISIT TO JERUSALEM. WISCHNEWSKI THOUGHT THE REQUEST WAS SIGNIFICANT AND THAT AMHISTORIC OPPORTUNITY MAY HAVE BEEN MISSED BY DAYANREFUSAL TO SEE SARTAWI. HOWEVER, WISCHNEWSKI FEELS THAT THE INCIDENT MAY REFLECT SOME FLEXIBILITY IN PLO ATTITUDES.

8. WISCHNEWSKI SAID THAT SARTAWI HAD ASSURED HIM THAT THE PLO WAS NOT BEHIND TERRORIST ACTIVITIES IN THE FRG.

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IN WISCHNEWSKI'S VIEW, THE PRIME CENTERS OF TERRORIST ACTIVITIES AT PRESENT ARE LOCATED IN BEIRUT AND BAGHDAD. HE NOTED IN PASSING THAT, OF ALL THE COUNTRIES HE HAD VISITED DURING THE SCHLEYER KIDNAPPING CRISIS, IRAQ WAS THE ONLY ONE WHICH HAD BEEN AMBIGUOUS ON THE PROSPECT OF ACCEPTING THE BADER-MEINHOF TERRORISTS; ALL THE OTHERS HAD BEEN CATEGORICAL IN THEIR REFUSAL TO DO SO. STOESSEL UNQTE VANCE

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